



# Professional Learning Package: Implementing Unit Starters



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**Module 1:**  
**Preparing to Teach with**  
**Unit Starters**  
*Learning Session 2*

# Module 1 Learning Sessions

Session	Guiding Questions
1 ✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is a Unit Starter?</li><li>• Why teach with Unit Starters?</li><li>• What resources are included in the Unit Starter?</li><li>• How do Unit Starters support standards-based instruction?</li></ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How are concepts and understandings organized in the Unit Starter?</li></ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How are concepts and understandings supported by the Unit Starter's texts, tasks, and question sequences?</li></ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How can I prepare to teach with the Unit Starter?</li></ul>

# Group Norms

- Be fully present.
- Actively participate.
- Embrace collaboration.
- Keep students at the center.



# Revisiting Session 1: Learning to Application

- What additional insights or reactions did you have as you read through your Unit Starter?

# Learning Session 2

- Guiding questions:
  - How are concepts and understandings organized in the Unit Starter?
    - What are universal concepts and unit concepts?
    - What are enduring understandings and essential questions?
    - What are disciplinary understandings and guiding questions?

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**TN**

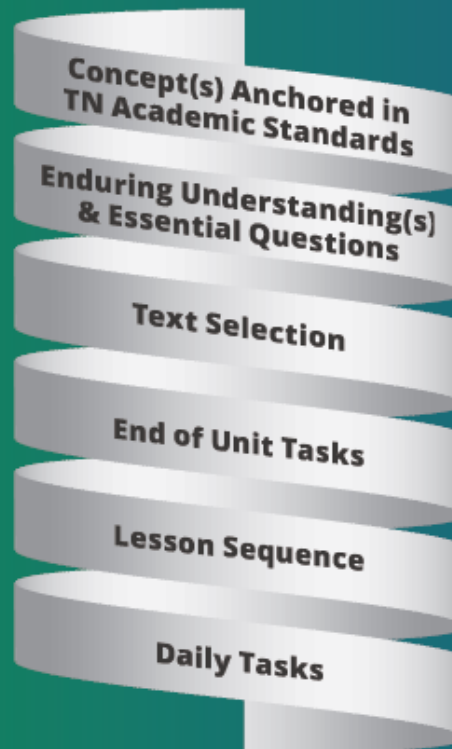
**How are concepts and  
understandings  
organized in the Unit  
Starter?**

# Literacy Unit Design Framework

## FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING LITERACY IN TENNESSEE

### INTEGRATION OF STANDARDS

The Tennessee Academic Standards should be integrated throughout the unit design. Teachers should select concepts based on knowledge requirements contained in the grade level content standards. Then, teachers should select specific ELA standards once texts and tasks are chosen to support students' reading comprehension and completion of daily and end of unit tasks.



### STUDENT NEEDS

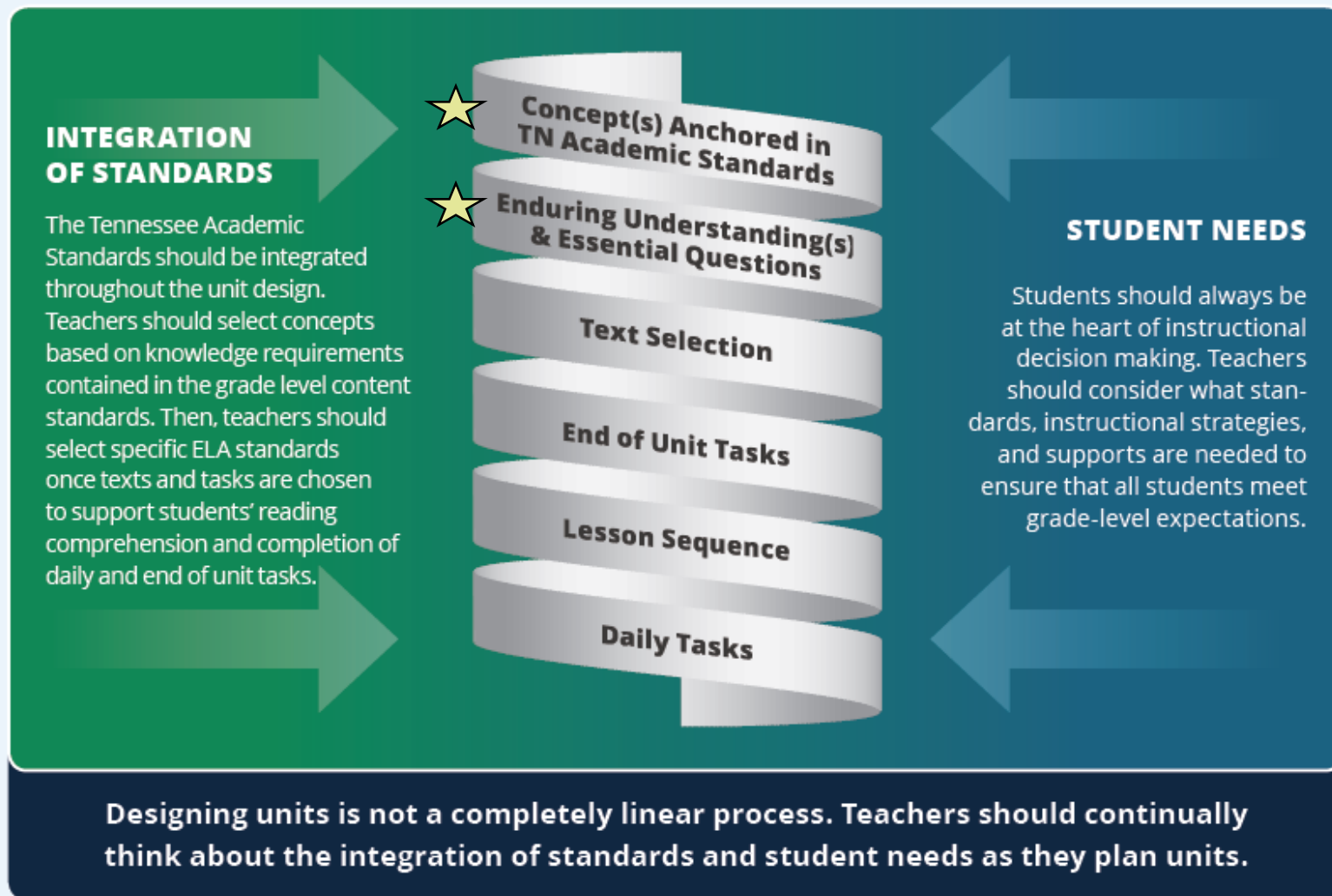
Students should always be at the heart of instructional decision making. Teachers should consider what standards, instructional strategies, and supports are needed to ensure that all students meet grade-level expectations.

Designing units is not a completely linear process. Teachers should continually think about the integration of standards and student needs as they plan units.

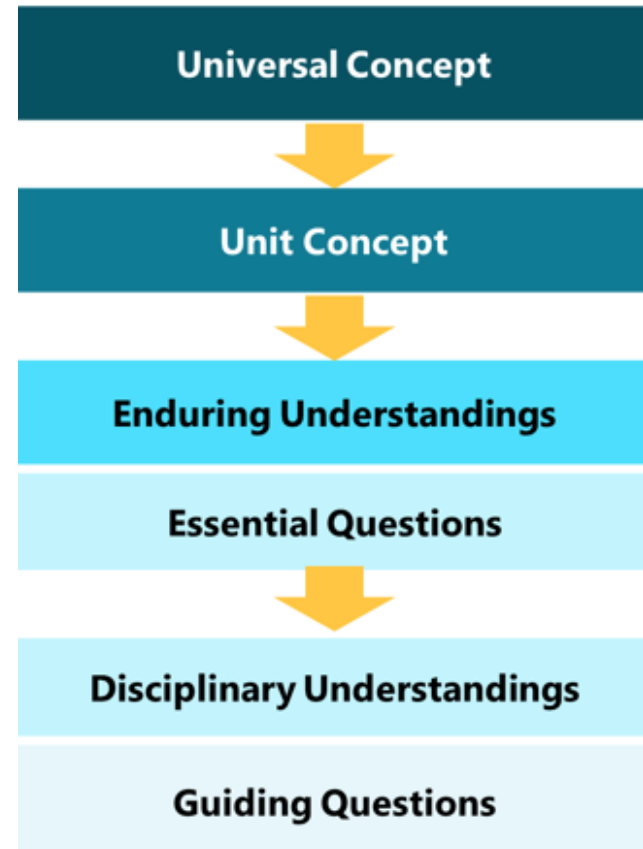
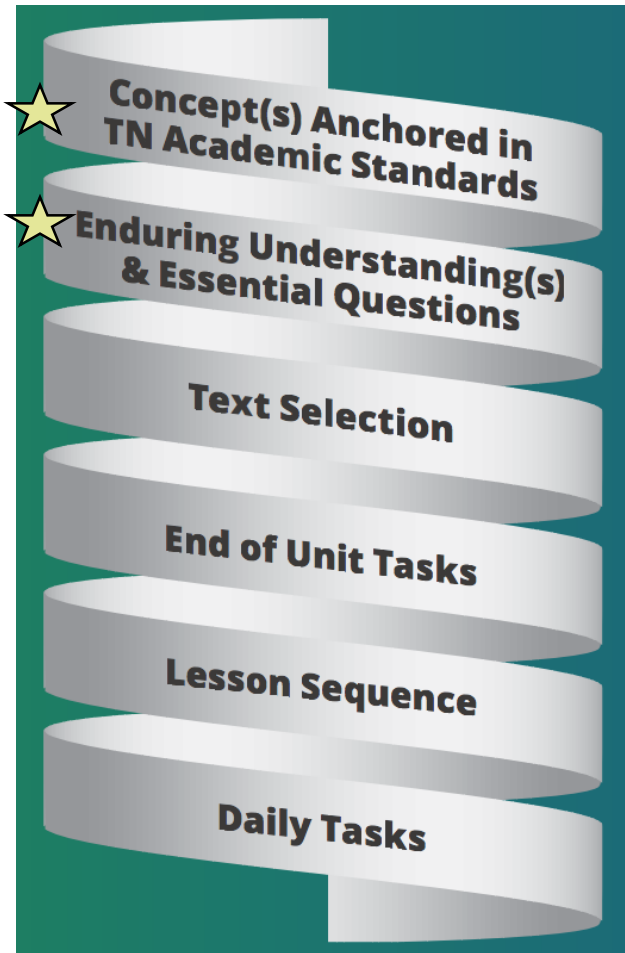


# Concepts as the Foundation of Unit Design

## FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING LITERACY IN TENNESSEE



# Connecting the Conceptual Hierarchy to the Unit Design Framework



# Comparing First Grade Tasks

## Example #1

Complete the pages in the “My Space Book.” On each of the following pages, write at least two facts you learned from the unit:

- The Earth
- The Sun
- The Stars
- The Moon

## Example #2

With a partner, create a poster that shows how the sky looks different at different times of the day. Your poster should include drawings and captions related to day and night on Earth, the phases of the moon, and the sun and stars.

**What kind of knowledge do these tasks require?**



# Comparing First Grade Tasks

## Example #3

You are an astronomer working for U.S. Space and Rocket Center. You have been asked to create a student-friendly brochure that you will share with students during a school field trip that explains (1) observable patterns in the day and night sky, (2) the seasons that impact Earth, and (3) the phases of the moon. Use illustrations and descriptions to explain these observable patterns. Your brochure should include:

- a front cover that illustrates and names the topic of the brochure;
- a section that illustrates and describes observable patterns from the day and night sky and explains why we observe those patterns;
- a section that illustrates and describes the pattern in Earth's seasons and explains why changes in season occur; and
- a section that illustrates and describes phases of the moon and explains why we observe those patterns.

Be sure to:

- provide some sense of closure;
- use details from the texts we have read; and
- use vocabulary words from the word display in our unit.

**What kind of knowledge does this task require?**

# Universal Concept



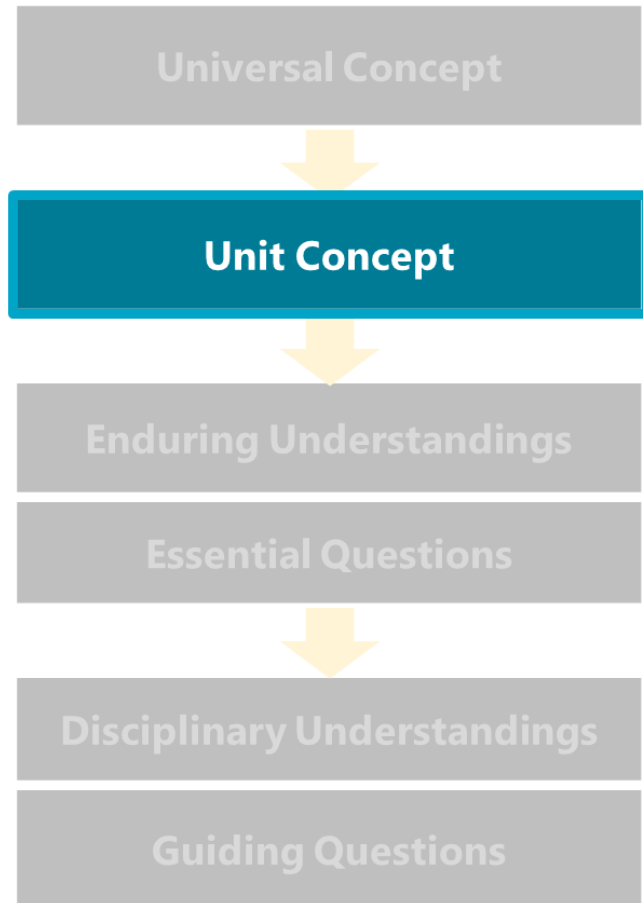
## Universal Concept:

A concept that bridges all disciplinary and grade-level boundaries.

This concept provides educators and students with an organizational framework for connecting knowledge across disciplines into a coherent view of the world.

Example: Patterns

# Unit Concept



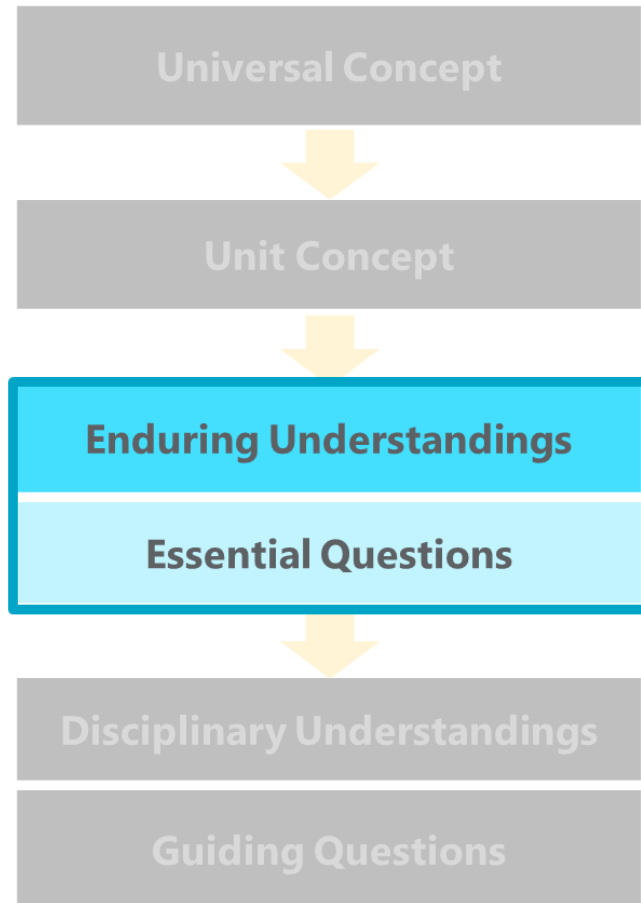
## Unit Concept

The application of the universal concept to the specific discipline – in this case, science.

This concept provides students with an organizational framework for connecting knowledge within the disciplines into a coherent view of the world and provides educators with a focus for unit planning.

**Example: Observable Patterns in the Earth, Sun, Moon, & Stars**

# Enduring Understandings and Essential Questions



## Enduring Understandings

The ideas we want students to understand, not just recall, from deep exploration of our unit concept.

The enduring understandings reflect the abstract, easily misunderstood, “big” ideas of the discipline.

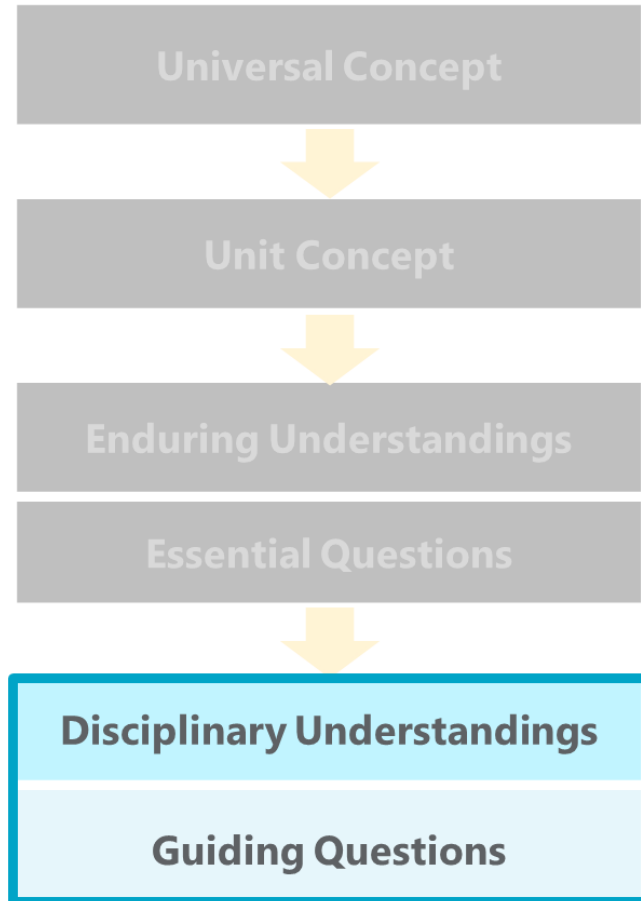
Example: Bodies in space move and change in appearance according to predictable patterns.

## Essential Questions

Open-ended questions that guide students’ exploration of the Enduring Understandings or “big” ideas of the discipline.

Example: How and why do bodies in space (Earth, sun, moon, stars) move and “change”?

# Disciplinary Understandings and Guiding Questions



## Disciplinary Understandings

The specific ideas and specialized vocabulary of the discipline. These ideas will focus instruction, build disciplinary knowledge, and provide the schema to organize and anchor new word learning.

Example: The Earth's position, rotation, and revolution cause patterns of change over shorter and longer periods of time (e.g., day/night, hours of daylight, seasons).

## Guiding Questions

Open-ended questions that guide students' exploration of the disciplinary understandings in the unit and refer specifically to the domain (e.g., ecosystems).

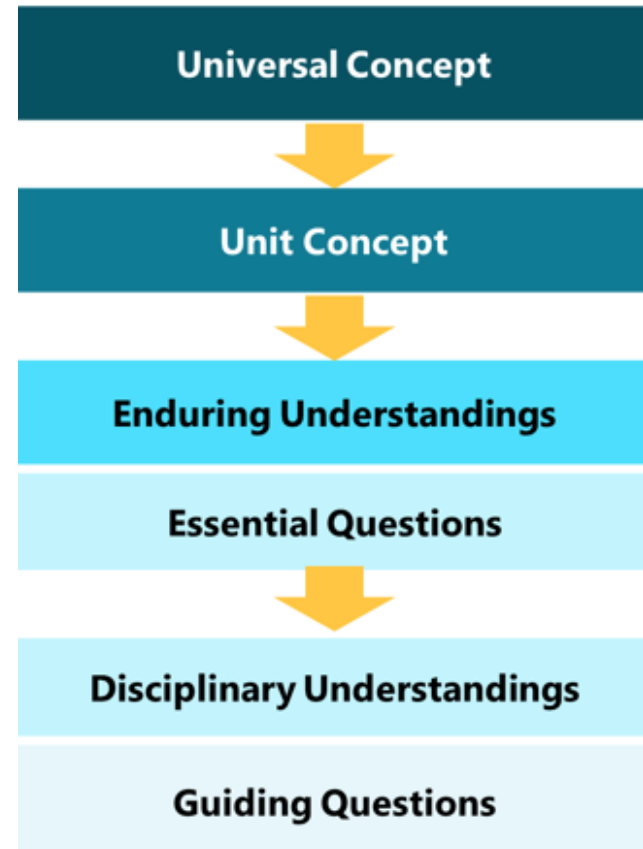
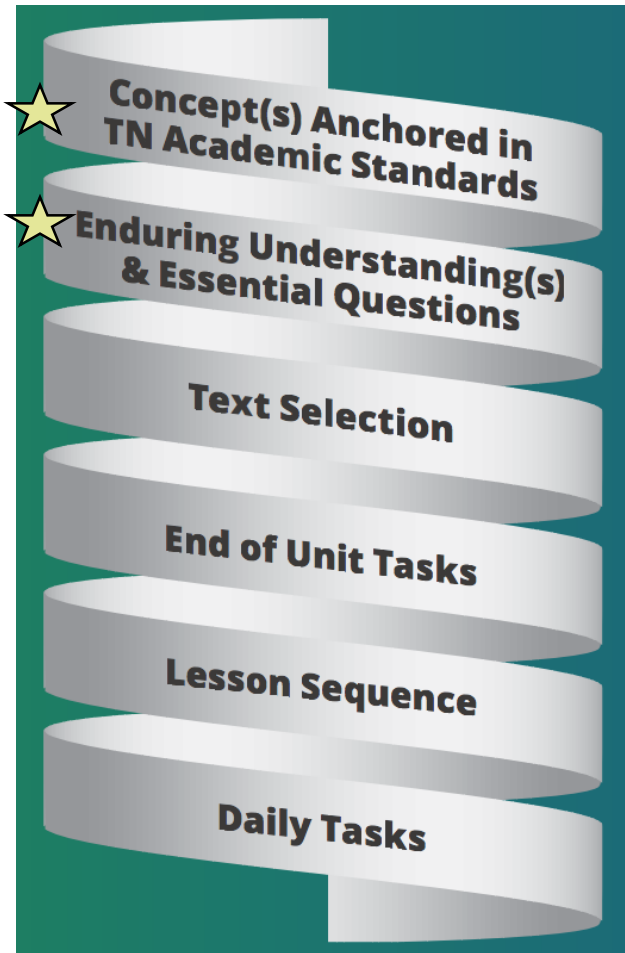
Example: How does the Earth move and what happens as a result?



# Conceptual Hierarchy Example

<b>Universal Concept</b>	Patterns
<b>Unit Concept</b>	Observable Patterns in the Earth, Sun, Moon, and Stars
<b>Enduring Understanding</b>	Observations over time help us detect, describe, and predict patterns of movement and change in bodies in space.
<b>Essential Question</b>	How do we know that bodies in space move and change? How can we tell?
<b>Disciplinary understanding</b>	Patterns in what we observe in the night sky are caused by movements and/or changing positions of the Earth and moon.
<b>Guiding Questions</b>	When and why does what we “see” (observe) in the night sky change?

# Connecting the Conceptual Hierarchy to the Unit Design Framework



# Connecting the Conceptual Hierarchy to the Unit Design Framework

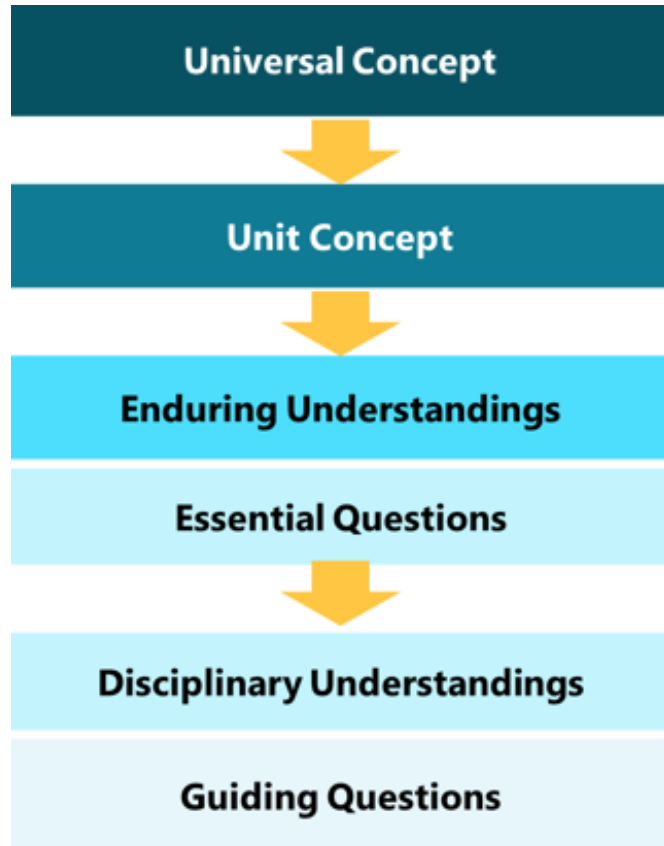
- **Enduring understandings** and **essential questions** are:
  - Inspired by the Tennessee Academic Standards
  - Explored through rich and complex texts
  - Developed through daily and end-of-unit tasks
- **Disciplinary understandings** and **guiding questions** are:
  - Supported by a purposeful sequence of lessons and readings
  - Organized in ways that build toward the enduring understandings and essential questions
  - Developed through daily and end-of-unit tasks

# Conceptual Hierarchy



- Imagine you are explaining what a conceptual hierarchy is to a colleague who doesn't know what it means. Think of an image that helps describe it. Draw and label the image.

# Conceptual Hierarchy



- Explore the Unit Starter you will use. Identify each part of the conceptual hierarchy:
  - Universal Concept
  - Unit Concept
  - Enduring Understandings & Essential Questions
  - Disciplinary Understandings & Guiding Questions
- Share the conceptual hierarchy for your unit with someone teaching a different unit. Describe the concepts and understandings in your own words.

# Closing Reflection

- How is the organization of the Unit Starter similar or different from the unit framework you're using right now?
- How might the organization of the Unit Starter's concepts and understandings support increased student learning?
- What about the organization of the Unit Starter might be challenging for teachers and/or students?

# Learning Session Summary

- In **Learning Session 2**, we addressed these questions:
  - How are concepts and understandings organized in the Unit Starter?
- In **Learning Session 3**, we will address these questions:
  - How are concepts and understandings supported by:
    - texts;
    - the end-of-unit task;
    - lesson sequences and daily tasks; and
    - daily question sequences for each reading?

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**Learning to  
Application**



# Learning to Application

Prior to our next learning session:

- Complete **Question 1** in **Appendix A: Unit Preparation Protocol** (located in the back of the Unit Starter)

## APPENDIX A: UNIT PREPARATION PROTOCOL

### Question 1: What will students learn during my unit?

Review the content goals for the unit and identify the desired results for learners.

- What are the concepts around which I will organize my unit (*universal concept, unit concept*)?
- What will students come to understand through deep exploration of these concepts (*essential questions, enduring understandings*\*)?
- What disciplinary knowledge will focus instruction and provide the schema for students to organize and anchor new words (*guiding questions, disciplinary understandings*)?
- Why is this content important for students to know?

\*Adapted from McTighe, J. & Seif, E. (2011), Wiggins, G. & McTighe (2013).

# For Learning Session 3

- Bring copies of the Unit Starter texts to the next learning session.
- If not all texts are available, prioritize finding texts for the first week's interactive read aloud and shared reading lessons.



*Districts and schools in Tennessee will exemplify excellence and equity such that all students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully embark on their chosen path in life.*

**Excellence | Optimism | Judgment | Courage | Teamwork**